

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 10 is amended and claim 19 is added. The amendment and added claim introduce no new matter. A Request for Continued Examination is attached. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 7-13 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0149572 to Kanai et al. ("Kanai") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0046224 to Bendik; and rejects claims 5, 6, 14 and 15 under U.S.C. §103(a) over Kanai in view of Bendik and U.S. Patent No. 6,850,893 to Lipkin et al. ("Lipkin"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action relies on Kanai as allegedly teaching the features of the independent claims, with the exception of setting an identifier for identifying the object, the identifier associated with the object in a one-to-one relationship. The Office Action relies on Bendik to remedy this shortfall. The analysis of the Office Action fails for at least the following reason.

Claim 1 recites, among other features, defining a retrieval condition for retrieving an object, the retrieval condition being defined based on at least one attribute of the object; setting an access right in association with the retrieval condition; setting an identifier for identifying the object, the identifier associated with the object in a one-to-one relationship; and in response to an access request from a user for the object matching the retrieval condition and the identifier, performing access control on the basis of the access right. Claim 10 recites similar features.

Close review of Kanai, reveals that it suffers from the same shortfall previously identified in the application of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0120858 to Porter et al. ("Porter") to the subject matter of the pending claims. Specifically, Kanai does

not teach, nor can it reasonably be considered to have suggested, at least the features of defining a retrieval condition for retrieving an object, the retrieval condition being defined based on at least one attribute of the object; and setting an access right in association with the retrieval condition.

The Office Action relies on the prior art discussion in paragraph [0014] of Kanai as disclosing these features. However, this paragraph, and Fig. 3 of Kanai to which it refers, depict a conventional access control system like those mentioned on pg. 1 of Applicant's specification. For example, in Fig. 3, image1.gif has an access right set to "owner." In other words, as in Porter, access control to stored documents in Kanai is based on access rights assigned to the document, which does not correspond to an access right set in association with a retrieval condition.

The Office Action fails to address these arguments and states that "Kanai teaches attribute of an object such as a document based on the creation date, creator or location of the document, which is a retrieval object for a document (sections 0010 and 0014)." The Office Action also states that "the retrieval condition for a document is defined in the XML or metadata format (sections 0016-0017, 0066-0060 and 0070-0074)." These assertions improperly paraphrase the relevant claim language and fail to address Applicant's argument or the actual claim features themselves. Moreover, the relied-upon sections of Kanai cannot reasonably be considered to correspond to defining a retrieval condition for retrieving an object, the retrieval condition being defined based on at least one attribute of the object; and setting an access right in association with the retrieval condition.

As argued previously, access control to stored documents in Kanai is based on access rights assigned to the document, which does not correspond to an access right set in association with a retrieval condition. Rather, in Kanai, any "access right" to a given document is set irrespective of any corresponding retrieval condition. For example, as

discussed above, in Fig. 3, the data entitled "doc/fig/image1.gif" has an access right, set to "owner". Limitations of such systems are specifically discussed, for example, on pg. 1, lines 8-24 of Applicant's specification, as filed, where access rights set to the objects themselves are noted as requiring significant workload to implement and maintain. On the contrary, because the present subject matter is configured in a manner that retrieval conditions of objects are defined, access rights for each retrieval condition are set, and access control is performed on the basis of the set access rights if an object to be accessed matches the retrieval condition, setting of access rights for each object is made easier, as well as enabling access rights to be dynamically changed, thereby contributing to reduced workload of administrators and avoided setting errors of access rights (see pgs. 19-20 of Applicant's specification).

Exemplary descriptions of a method of operation wherein access rights are set in association with a retrieval condition, rather than the object itself, are provided on pg. 7, line 11 - pg. 8, line 7 of Applicant's specification. For example, as depicted in Figs. 2 and 3, from the retrieval condition "Creation date within 30 days", each user belonging to a group name [group1] is given access to the document titled "Schedule in June" with READ and WRITE as of Jun. 20, 2000, but is not given access to the documents titled "About a New Organization (Confidential Document)" and "Schedule in May". This methodology is clearly different than the conventional system referenced in Kanai, in which any access rights are assigned to a specific data file.

None of the other references are applied in a manner to overcome the identified shortfall in Kanai.

Additionally, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine Kanai and Bendik in the manner suggested. For example, the Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to combine the allegedly corresponding unique document identifier of Bendik with the Kanai system. However, this conclusion ignores the fact that

Kanai is directed to enabling sophisticated retrieval using various information keys, rather than a simple access using a name of data or file (see paras. [0020] and [0024] of Kanai). As such, limiting Kanai to setting an identifier for identifying the object, the identifier associated with the object in a one-to-one relationship, and, in response to an access request from a user for the object matching the retrieval condition and the identifier, performing access control on the basis of the access right, would render Kanai unsuitable for its intended purpose and impermissibly alter its method of operation.

For at least the above reasons, the applied references cannot reasonably be considered to have suggested all of the combinations of features positively recited in independent claims 1 and 10. Additionally, claims 2-9 and 11-18 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the applied references for at least the respective dependence of these claims, directly or indirectly, on an allowable base claim, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Claim 19 is also allowable for reasons similar to those discussed above regarding claims 1 and 10.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:
Request for Continued Examination

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